

**County** Cleveland County  
**Department of Social Services**

**Submitted By** LaSandra Pearson

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**Project Title** Point of Entry Voter Registration

**Category** Cost Savings Measures and/or Improvements in Efficiency  
(Please select one)

### **Project Description and Summary**

**What did you do?**

**Describe your program or project. What did you do? What is the history behind the program/project? What did you hope to accomplish? What was your timeline? Your budget? How did you identify your objectives? How well did you use available resources?**

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993 Sec 7 states that all agencies that provide a public service must offer a voter registration process. On January 4, 1995 North Carolina began adhering to this practice and Cleveland County DSS put in place the opportunity for all individuals the option to register to vote.

The Voter Registration process was traditionally handled by each

individual caseworker who offered voter registration to all individuals that were either applying for services, recertifying and/or changing their name/address. At the end of each month, hours were spent to capture data maintained by each of our 75+ employees for the number of individuals registered; the number who declined; as well as other data such as the number who were not in the office.

Late in 2014 and early 2015, the Voter Registration processes by local DSS agencies was under scrutiny. Concerns were raised that all potential voter registrants were not being reached and that DSS agencies were not adequately adhering to the National Voter Registration Act requirements as a Voter Registration Agency.

Cleveland County DSS sought a solution that would expand our potential of reaching more individuals to offer Voter Registration and provide more accurate data to capture the contacts made for both in office visits and contacts by phone and mail. To achieve this we identified an employee who would act as the Voter Registration Coordinator beginning May 2015.

One of the first changes made was to implement a "Point of Contact" approach to offering Voter Registration. Every individual who visits our agency for any of our Economic Benefit programs is now given the opportunity to register to vote as they are signed in for whatever business they are here to conduct. This is completed for all programs including Food and Nutrition Services, Work First, Medicaid, Energy, Day Care, Special Assistance as well as any other programs offered. This is done regardless of the purpose of the visit, whether an initial application, recertification, or to report a change. This ensures that each individual is offered the opportunity to let the receptionist know if they were already registered, declined or wanted to register and/or make changes.

For 2015 and 2016, the receptionist also completed an electronic declination form when individuals declined Voter Registration for any reason. New policy was received from the National Voter Registration office in September, 2016, which eliminated the declination process, which has further simplified the point of entry Voter Registration process

for our county.

The second change implemented was the use of the electronic Voter Registration process. Clerical and individual workers have access to the VR online where they can report straight to Raleigh, while the client is standing at their window or in their office. If the individual completes the form in the agency either clerical or the caseworker will send to the local Board of Elections (BOE) with-in 5 days: via inter-office mail.

To ensure that all completed voter registration forms are submitted timely to the Board of Elections, staff place them in the voter registration coordinators designated basket. The VR coordinator then submits the forms to the Board of Elections using their agency transmittal form. In addition to submitting an Agency Transmittal Form to the BOE at the beginning of each month, the VR coordinator also sends the total number that registered for the previous month, number that were given to individuals and mailed out or e-mailed out.

### **Project Success and Impact**

#### **What was the outcome?**

**Was your program/project a success? What was the impact? How did you measure the impact? How widespread is the impact of your program/project? How were you able to overcome obstacles and challenges? Did your program/project meet your established objectives?**

By having the majority of all Voter Registrations handled at the point of entry by receptionist, this has simplified our system of capturing data to reflect the number of individuals offered an opportunity to vote, the number registered in the office, as well as changes made. This information is provided monthly to the local Board of Elections and to our Social Services Board.

In addition to ensuring all visitors are given the opportunity to register to vote, our Voter Registration at point of entry process has helped expedite the process for the caseworker once they have the client in their office. If an individual who declined to register with the receptionist later decides once they are in the workers office that they would like to register, that worker is still able to assist them. Caseworkers also, continue to offer

Voter Registration when clients do not complete their application or recertification process in office.

This change in our process has made a tremendous difference in the amount of completed registration forms provided to the Board of Elections within a timely manner.

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